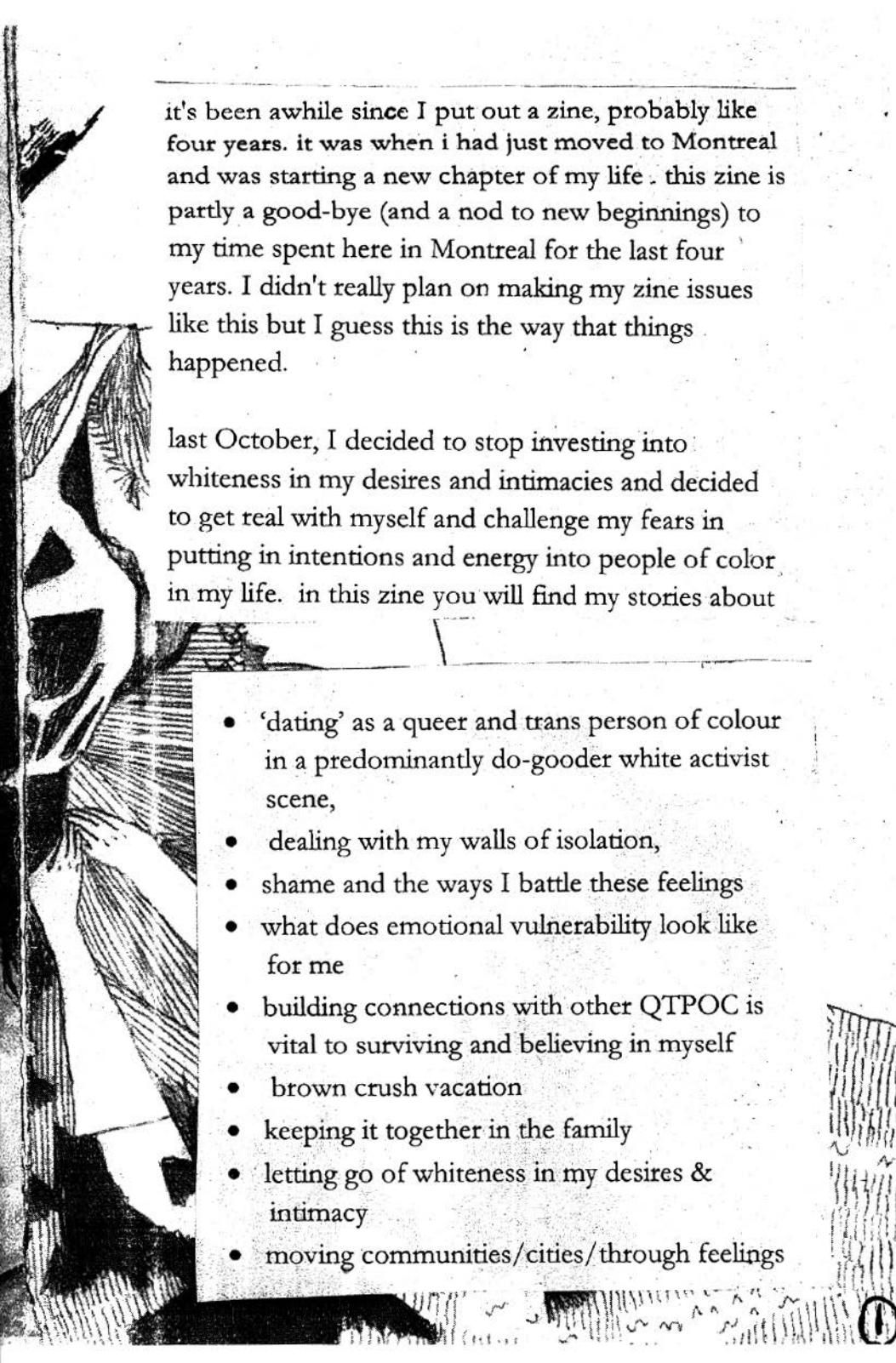


2B
AZN
ENUF
(always)

Take care when reading this zine, I write about physical and emotional abuse, suicidal idealation, dysphoria, self-harm through out my stories alongside just figuring out where I am at with things and how I work through these feelings.

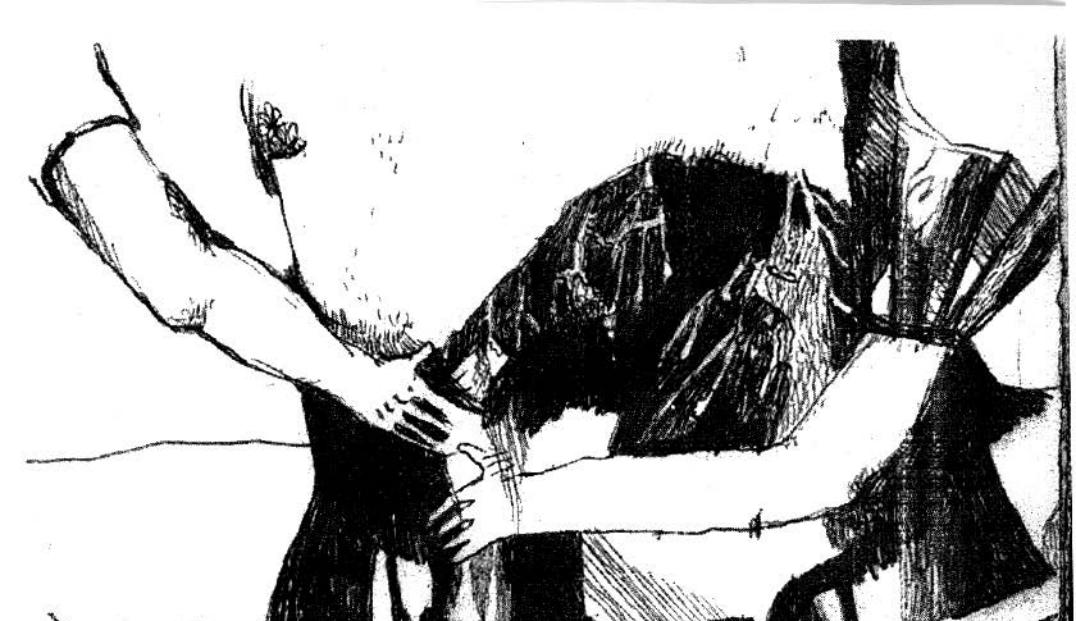
these feelings are my own and are not those to be co-opted or understood by white folks. these feelings are specific to my experiences of racism, and walking through this world as being gender non-conforming, sometimes read as male, but lately read as a woman within and without queer communities. but it's all complicated right in that growing up with little understandings and embodiments of asian (trans) masculinity even within the queer communities i navigate, i still dont have a language or way of understanding my gender to myself. these are writings that come out of working through my understandings of abuse shown through "care", working to center my yellowness in my desires & intimate relationships/ working through those hard feelings of guilt and shame when those feelings i have learned to block off, / working to be accountable to these feelings, breaking cycles of violence and to pretty much trying to love more...



it's been awhile since I put out a zine, probably like four years. it was when i had just moved to Montreal and was starting a new chapter of my life . this zine is partly a good-bye (and a nod to new beginnings) to my time spent here in Montreal for the last four years. I didn't really plan on making my zine issues like this but I guess this is the way that things happened.

last October, I decided to stop investing into whiteness in my desires and intimacies and decided to get real with myself and challenge my fears in putting in intentions and energy into people of color in my life. in this zine you will find my stories about

- 'dating' as a queer and trans person of colour in a predominantly do-gooder white activist scene,
- dealing with my walls of isolation,
- shame and the ways I battle these feelings
- what does emotional vulnerability look like for me
- building connections with other QTPOC is vital to surviving and believing in myself
- brown crush vacation
- keeping it together in the family
- letting go of whiteness in my desires & intimacy
- moving communities/cities/through feelings



I started writing and putting my stories into zines to remember that I am writing and it is a collection of stories that encapsulate the moments in my life that I would have forgotten otherwise. I want to collect my stories all together. I want to value everyone in my life, not here for white folk, my writing is for myself and for my friends and folk that I have shared energy & love with.

this zine is a collection of my writing from 2012 – 2013.



soen soen nən

july 2013

zinesves@gmail.com

Coast Salish Territory, Victoria, BC

Strong like
trees

I

have your **box**

believing in the good of people: an account of dating as a queer person of colour in montreal

sometime i wonder about whiteness and how it affects all my intimate relationships. Whiteness makes intimacy feel uncomfortable, sometimes like grating sandpaper between my hands. There is always this nagging feeling where I am my white dates arm hanger, like I don't even have any agency in defining my own identity / race with whom I am with. I always feel like I am defining myself against whiteness when I am with whiteness. how do I reconcile with these feelings of alienation in my intimate relationships and how this alienation mediates back and forth from my intimate relationships into my way of living I am building for myself. I have always wondered how do I define my own racial identity when the only thing defining myself in the relationship is whiteness.

The way whiteness constructs itself removes itself from accountability by always creating a standard of a “good” person based on certain activities and affiliations, which then creates a bad person/inadequate sense of feeling if one is not the former. You should date this person or give them the benefit of the doubt because they use the right language and do the right things considered radikewl, but actually are just shitty people. Since this activism supports whiteness, white activists have a lot of social power in defining who goes to events, meets people, be friends etc with other people and basically developing a sense of community and forming friendships. I wish that if people considered their access to social power etc they would consider how they structure their lives and relationship to people of color in their lives. Like introduce your friends of color, don't go to spaces that have fucked up racist shit, stop gossiping about how you might not be a nice person anymore, don't go to events that are mainly for people of color and their allies* (ask first, respect space), be there for mutual support, start adding white to

whenever you use queer, acknowledge the racial dynamics of the space i.e. it's going to mainly care-free white queers.

Even in the city that I live in where white queers seems to be doing the good work for the struggle – prisoner correspondence for queer and trans prisoners, organizing parties that are anti-racist and anti-capitalist, attending workshops and panels about indigenous sovereignty, with an overall understanding that racism is a thing. I still feel a huge sense of alienation with the work these white folk do. It seems that dealing with racism and white supremacy in social justice communities mean you can make amends by learning more about race etc through reading books and listening to speakers. I wonder what it means that learning about privilege and access to power means when it happens through attending workshops, events, buying the latest book at the most recent book launch. What does it mean when I want people's ideas of white supremacy to not just be learned through secondary materials, materials removed from the ways one can posture themselves in a space. How does saying hi, acknowledging people in a space or body language and interpretation of others, gossiping, creating exclusive friend cliques differ than the going to workshops, or gaining access to knowledge through this so-called activism?

these activists are the ones who seem to have their politics in tact or seem to be doing the 'good' work to verify that they are not shitty people to date. dating white people made me feel like dating was a game, a place where how many people I could date to show my social capital in that I was capable as a person of colour in a majority white queer scene to date more than one person. There were so many obstacles to consider which made it difficult for me to connect to any white folk in any capacity outside of a friendship. for example, I had to run through my head a mental activist checklist: who are their friends, how many other friends of color do they have, what do they do, why do they talk about gardening in this way that is so basic and so self-

congratulatory way, what are their opinions on x, y, and z, do they get it when I make racist jokes about being azn or is that laugh filled with discomfort?

this was a part of the mental checklist that I had to go through casually while I was testing the waters with forming some sort of more intimate bond. it was a lot of work, it didn't catch em' all; I still got asked what's the difference between person of color and racialized and that the ways I talked about race was too academic for them, or it was just silence on the fact that they were white which was never framed in our conversation; instead their whiteness always framed my experience and the only ways that I responded to this was always pointing out how white the space was, how fucked up the keynote was at some student academic conference, otherwise it would just go unnoticed. I tried really hard to date someone in the city but I only ended up dating people long distance. Maybe dating long distance could keep my alienation with whiteness at bay, or maybe the only white people that I could consider dating just did not live in this overwhelming do-gooder white activist community.

I've been thinking about emotional vulnerability and what does that mean for me? I know that being vulnerable means making sure to take care of myself by vocalizing my needs and stating where I come from. It means to make no apologies (mostly to myself) about what I am feeling in the moment. Taking care of myself means saying where I am at and am coming from, putting those things on the table when talking to other people about conflicts, miscommunications, disagreeances. Being vulnerable means going from where we both are at. It means for me to clarify that the other person is saying their feelings like they are just saying where they are at without any blaming or judgment; it means for me to say this out loud because emotionally I am used to internalization of other people's feelings through blame. Because I have lived through and in emotionally toxic situations, grown to learn that I should not assert my boundaries and or the things I feel are not valid because of my race or gender. Being vulnerable means saying out loud the things that we all know but somehow our bodies still forget. So when I ask you "you are just saying how you feel but not how you are feeling about me" its a way to challenge my feelings of codependency and worthlessness. Its a way for me to battle my emotions that shut down and block out in times of conflict and/or disagreeance. These are systems of verbalization that I am putting in place to resist my silence I have learned in my existence.

HOW TO DEAL WITH WALLS OF ISOLATION WHEN YOU ARE BUILDING THEM WITHOUT EVEN NOTICING

building myself a little island has served me well when i am in school and i do not want to work with other people in my program because i do not have the energy to spend energy with their shitty whiteness. building an island with myself is helpful when the people around me are hurting me, taking away my control, forcing things. building an island for myself seems to be helpful in the moment when my only response to my dad's temper and aggression is to turn off and tune out.

building these islands serve me well when i don't want to engage with my feelings or i don't even want to have them at that very moment because they make me feel too vulnerable, so tightly linked to my core. it's like these feelings and these feeling with other people is the only way to connect myself to my core. how do i have my own feelings that are not dependent on other people's approval or response. how do i express these feelings when they are mine and they are what making me who i am right now. sitting here on this floral rocking chair listening to this band from halifax, writing things that make me cry, making lists that are never finished and are already three pages long. how do i feel when for in the past, much of my feelings are dependent on other people's feelings? how do i feel my feelings when they often need validation to feel real because existing otherwise means alienation and isolation because otherwise in alienation i'm told to be someone else, some other asian when i have no fucking clue what it means to be asian besides when i write azn. i have no idea what my gender means except the ways that i feel my anxiety rise up in my eyes, how i forget to breathe sometimes when i experience fear of walking out the door, or for a man to sit too close to me on the metro and asking me a question that i understand when i don't know if he was just weird or if it's because azns never speak english anyways. what are the ways that i exist in my body that are for my own. but what are the ways that i exist that are for my own?

how do i move from a place to be with my own feelings and to be vulnerable with my own?

does it mean to reconsider what building an emotionalless island means for myself? what does it mean to recenter myself and to reground when in the past i have done this in isolation? how do i reconsider my ideas of care for myself when in the past it means i take a step back from everything and work things internally and there are no pressures for me to care about other people.

SOMETIMES WHEN SHAME SITS CLOSE TO ME I HAVE TO REMEMBER

i feel my shame sitting very close to me. it sits outside of my thoughts about myself. it brings up questions of self-worth. it demands attention to self-blame. it doesn't let me take care of myself that much. instead i am in thoughts of self-doubt & inadequacy.

today i walked home but couldn't make it from the grocery store to home without thinking about my (un)worth. i told myself to let the thought rest for a bit, to not try to think about it or decide what to do with it. shame gives me fear to ask for things and to trust anyone.

i have thought to myself several times in the last few days that i feel unstable and not grounded. sometimes i tell myself it's coz i'm busy, school is ending, things have shifted drastically and sometimes i need to give myself time to re-adjust.

i want to be alone. i want to be okay with my solitude right now but i feel like i am on a see-saw, up and down with how i'm feeling. not focused, not paying attention to anything or the right thing. what do i want?

i'm lost in what i don't want or in the *i don't know what i want*

i don't know what i want right now. i don't know what i do not want.

lost here often though.

right now i want:

- to give myself the space to take care of my body (like, stretches, making sure to eat, meditation/**deep** breathes, brushing)
- to give myself to work on things that don't have to do with anything (like to draw and to write , to sit down and do things for me whatever that looks like)
- to give myself the space and respect for myself to say no. to state my boundaries (i feel i have heavily fallen out of knowing what they are) and that I *know* i need to thinking about my needs right now.
- i want to love myself. i want to make space to love myself, to give myself love, to treat myself the ways i treat others. to not let myself beat me down but instead to be patient, gentle, non-judging with myself. too often then not, i feel like i judge harshly to myself if i make mistakes. i want to give myself forgiveness and seek calmness

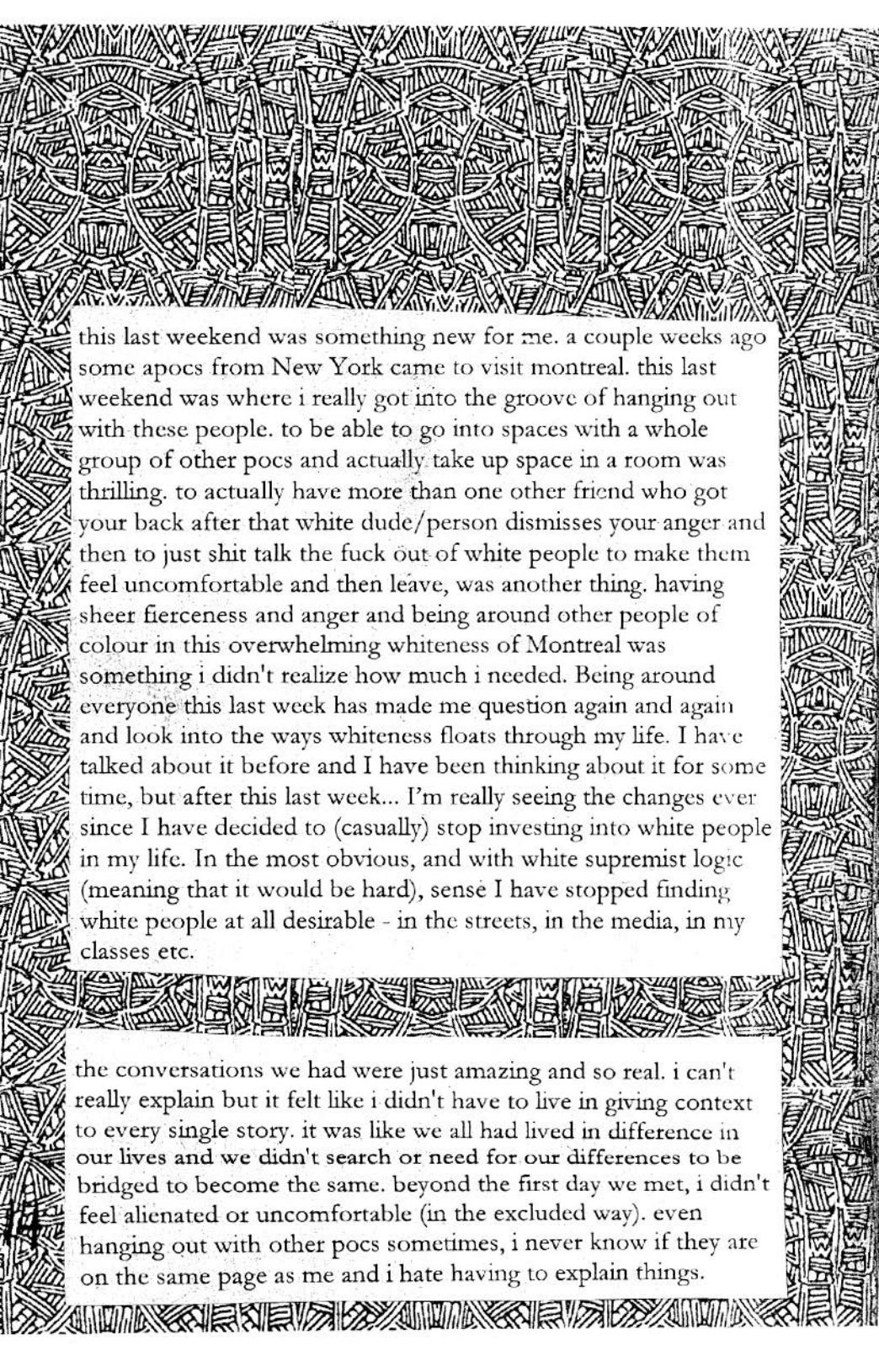
the more time I am off the internet, the more i realize how much i have been ignoring myself when i use it. i don't have internet at home and am updating livejournal from work. it's a weird feeling. moving from being on livejournal for over 10 hours a day or sometime less to maybe at max six hours? and i don't go into work on weekends so it's like only monday to thursday. as much as i feel really crappy right now - really frustrated with myself and people (may have to do with work) but also with not being able to have my own home and the lack of other people of colour in my life. for the last while i've decided that i'm not dating white people or investing into white people besides those i am already dating/invested in with. some dude asked me on a date because i asked him on a date in october but decided against going on one because it's just another white person that i'm supposedly supposed to care about?

i've just been feeling really sad and empty and mad about white people/white friends in my life. i have pretty consistently have been trying to create more of a poc community in montreal more out of an act of survival so i start hating myself less in all this whiteness. the more that i am off of the internet the more i do want to be back on it so i can feel like i'm apart of some communityt because of how much in my life there isn't what i'm wanting but i can't go back on the internet. i can't have friendships online anymore , i can't be invested in the internet as much as i was a year ago... where finding people on the net was the best because reality was so hard to fucking cope with. i realize that i use the internet to disconnect, dissociate and to sometimes just create a false sense of community online/ not in my real life and i don't want to be there again. i want to be present or try to be present in my life with the people that care about and am

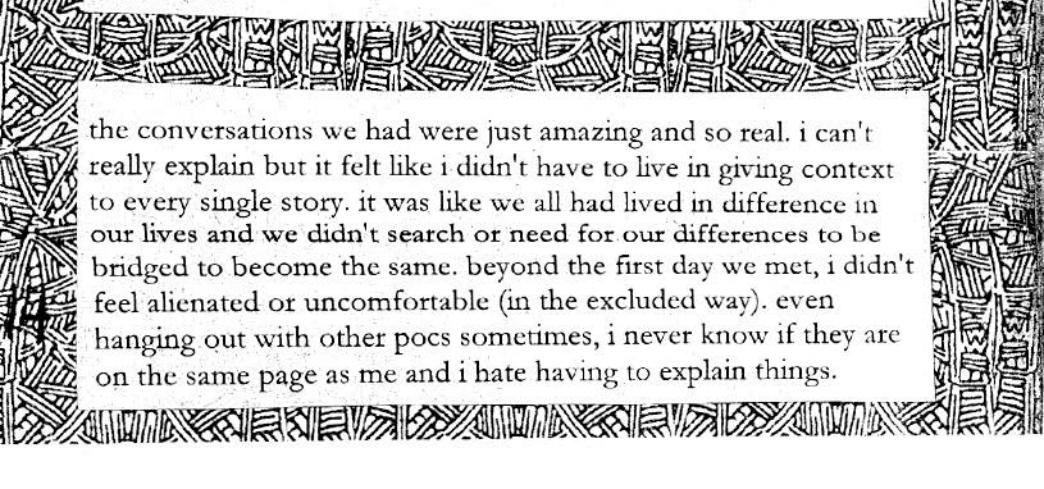
friends with. i am finding it to be so cathartic to write letters to people. to write them my process and my thoughts and for them to be at a place also to get where i am at to write back. maybe i am just shifting my internet processing to writing letters to people
but at least i have something in my hands, i can accumulate things rather than simply see something digital that can be deleted in an instant.

i've been writing letters pretty much every week. i realize that who i send my letters to matter so much. this year starting right now i want to connect with more people of colour in my life, whether in person or through snail mail. i really need this. It's all apart of trying to further unpack my self-hate & internalized racism. figuring out ways and practices to cope living in overwhelming civil whiteness. building up material goods that i can read over and over; accumulate; archive. i realize how often i never see another person of colour reflect back to me in my friend hang outs, about how i am feeling so alienated from myself right now and from other friends of colour. i needa stop this.

it's also weird when i intensely process things with people through letters and when people ask me what i have been up to, i don't know how to be like "well somebody i vaguely knew died and i was sort of sad the entire week" i usually just say that i forget. i don't say it puts me in a horrible space where all i can think about is death and self-harm all the time. do people not experience this all the time? funny how much everything becomes normalize. i don't think as much about dying / spacing out as i did in april, but my paranoia has pretty much turned into death but not dead. i am so confused by myself. i feel like if i have another crises i'm probably going to reach a level of dying and self-harming physically. i really don't want to be in that space.
~~now~~ trying to make friends and networks that can catch me if i fall harder than i'm used to.



this last weekend was something new for me. a couple weeks ago some apocs from New York came to visit montreal. this last weekend was where i really got into the groove of hanging out with these people. to be able to go into spaces with a whole group of other pocs and actually take up space in a room was thrilling. to actually have more than one other friend who got your back after that white dude/person dismisses your anger and then to just shit talk the fuck out of white people to make them feel uncomfortable and then leave, was another thing. having sheer fierceness and anger and being around other people of colour in this overwhelming whiteness of Montreal was something i didn't realize how much i needed. Being around everyone this last week has made me question again and again and look into the ways whiteness floats through my life. I have talked about it before and I have been thinking about it for some time, but after this last week... I'm really seeing the changes ever since I have decided to (casually) stop investing into white people in my life. In the most obvious, and with white supremist logic (meaning that it would be hard), sense I have stopped finding white people at all desirable - in the streets, in the media, in my classes etc.



the conversations we had were just amazing and so real. i can't really explain but it felt like i didn't have to live in giving context to every single story. it was like we all had lived in difference in our lives and we didn't search or need for our differences to be bridged to become the same. beyond the first day we met, i didn't feel alienated or uncomfortable (in the excluded way). even hanging out with other pocs sometimes, i never know if they are on the same page as me and i hate having to explain things.

i also just exited some sort of crush vacation with one of the apocs visiting from new york. i am back in reality, i guess. i have never been with another person in such an intense but fleeting way. it only lasted a weekend, a short amount of time but a time that reminded me that it was the first time in forever that I could be in my body as I was having sex with someone. i didn't feel like there were any expectations about our bodies together except that our sexual chemistry was there and we just wanted to touch skin and fuck.

a lot of the time I think that having a shared experience of being trans might help me feel safe, more at home in myself when I am fucking other people but that has never been the case. But parts of me just wonder about how do other trans people's whiteness filter into my lines of intimacy with them. How does this uncomfortableness with whiteness feels like a slow grating of sandpaper against my skin, against my need for loud explosive loving intimacy? I want intimacy with honesty and courage. I want intimacy without second guesses or holding back. I'm done with whiteness in my intimate relationships. I'm in this stage in my life where I want to love deep and get deep real fast and the only way that seems to be on my horizon is loving other brown folk.

last year i was hooking up with this white dude who seemed to be coming into his queerness. rather simply, the ways that we connected in queerness was my response to his question that he should just "google queers of colour and stop wasting my time". he was telling me how people thought he looked trans. whatever that means. but in this city it probably just shows how masculinity and whiteness is normalized and validated for a trans body. he had adopted a way of standard anarchist radikewl queer dress, wearing t-shirts with jeans and wearing a hankerchief around his neck) as his main uniform. but with this white dude, as i was fucking him on my bed one day i could feel this dynamic present as he felt weird that i wanted to suck his dick all the time. that he wanted things to be reciprocal in order to suck my dick. he saw me as a woman or someone in a body that has been seen as female in the world and in that moment he wanted to be feminist so that things would be equal between him and i.

i'm tired of having my body read in ways that i don't appreciate or identify with as i move through the world. when my anxiety gets bad and i can't carve space for myself in the streets that i walk

down, to school to my home. i don't even know how much i relate to my body in the gender that i feel like i have and have been cultivating, appreciating. i try not to think of the specific points about my gender or about how my gender can be found outlined through my body showing up in my hands and my shoulders because sometimes it never shows up. and so, to share space with another person of colour in such an intimate way as we took each other clothes and touched skin against skin this weekend felt like i was being in a space where nothing really matter. nothing really matter really did matter. it was as if things were so important and so full of meaning and significance that it all fell into place without asking.

before fucking we had never talked about queerness or identity, we came into the same space just by way of mutual politics and friends. we never really talked until friday evening. there were times during when we fucked that i wondered how he saw my body but it never became so much as a question, moreso as a thought in space. the way that he respected my body didn't make me feel like how i identified mattered. i thought that my identity - being faggy and gender non-conforming & queer - would be something that i would want to stand strongly in the times that i fucked someone else, but at this moment and connection between him, it didn't. i felt like not have this in our dynamic is what made me feel so situated in my body. i had no fears of feeling discomfort in my chest or in my junk. i don't really understand it all but i know that this dynamic gave me room to rethink and rewrap my relationship to my gender or how i think my gender arises in day-to-day situations.

perhaps, and probably most likely there was something about the way that i connected with him. in that the weekend felt like a daze and being with and around him wasn't self-conscious and didn't feel like a burden. i shared things with him that i have never really shared with anyone else in this world. what brought on sharing of intimate details about my life that i have never said outloud, i'm not too sure. he talked about growing up close to virginia beach in a mainly working-class black neighbourhood and then being shipped to a school in virginia beach where for the first time in his life he spent time with white folk. we talked about our families, our relationships with our parents and how we both know we are never really welcome back into our folk's home. but we still will have our families somehow in our lives.

i know for sure as a couple summers ago my folks and i were basically like "we're family but we know that you (as in me) have moved out" and he's the same in that he can go back to his parents house but he will never ask them for anything - not even gas money or rent or cash for whatever. he talked about his relationship with his pops , the silence. reminding me of my dad's deep denial about my identity , my queerness which often results in silence.

RELEARNING THE WAY MY FAMILY KEEPS ITSELF

Z GETHR

it's a weird combination but most of the times i have intense conversation with my mom in public is in random ass cafes and i'm usually crying a lot. having these conversations at home doesn't really happen but i'm thankful to have this relationship with my mom esp when a couple years ago sharing any sort of conversation that had to do with feelings was kind of out of the question. i really appreciate my mom. sometimes i feel hurt because sometimes we don't talk about things - which is much of how my family deals with things but having these conversations open up the space to know that talking about feelings can happen and it's okay if we are not having them all the time or if we have similar communication styles.

today my dad kept asking me if i needed anything, like a wool jacket or wool socks or a shirt - those things are on sale. i have learned that this is the way that my dad shows care, like it's the only way that he knows how to. he talks about feelings staring into space and gestures abstractly to them. this used to bother me a lot because i wanted my dad to talk to me about our feelings so we could move forward, but the more time i spend at time and the ways that his history comes up, i just realize that this is how he communicates. as my mom says you can't change people and it's the best to accept things and to keep going. like the other day i bought some plastic flowers and my dad told me not to get them and then later on he mentions in the car about how he used to put those petals on the flowers when he was six. intense memories just float into our conversation, said in bitterness but never enough space or time to talk about it. my dad won't talk about it so all i can do is really guess and just listen.

i guess i am constantly thinking about mia mingus' post on collaboration and loving each other and how she talks about it's more about the process, like how you get there with each other than the end result because ultimately in liberation work it is the relationships, the ways you treat others, how you work through your pain, hurt, shame and guilt and all of those hard feelings. with my dad and my family, i have learned to emotionally block off a lot of my feelings so that i don't feel them or i have cut people out of my life in any sort of way where something comes up that causes me pain. the ways that i have learned to deal with pain and hurt is to avoid them, that means cutting off things. avoidance, denial which really has cut my emotional capacity. i have learned that i can project my expectations onto other people and then turn it into blame when the other person does not meet these expectations that i have never verbalized. i am learning that i am not only hurting other people, but ultimately i am hurting myself. i am not separate from other people, from people i love but rather everything is connected the ways that we grow and the ways that we hurt. isolating myself to my hurt in turn isolate my hurts to people i love.

as i've told my friends, as i have process through these feelings, i've told my friends that these are the ways that i have learned and been taught to protect myself. become a lone wolf, cannot deal with the pain i have, i have felt as a child that i never really process, i told myself i will never let anyone hurt me again and so i turned myself inwards, i turned away from other and closed myself away from love and compassion. i built huge walls thick and stiff that did not bend.

and I'm learning these emotional/survival response creates even more separation from others. it doesn't let me sit with myself to allow myself to have feelings of shame, guilt and hurt because i feel so ashamed that i am even having these feelings. they make me feel like i am in a place of scarcity and isolation where i cannot get out of and this is all that i have. i find it hard to seek forgiveness with myself about the ways that my dad has hurt me. last december i wrote him a letter telling him the ways that he has hurt and emotionally abused me. the blame, the isolation, the coldness of his actions and how he has affected me. i tried to have a talk with him and it just didn't work. i couldn't give him forgiveness. I couldn't give myself forgiveness, I couldn't forgive. It seemed unfathomable because he needed to recognize the ways that he has hurt me... and why wasn't he showing it. It came onto the point that I am his child and he is my father and that it is what our relationships is.

I am trying to see my father's care through his actions; I am trying to recognize the ways he tries to uncover his hurt through small snippets when we are at the grocery store or at the gas station. I have learned that I need to read between the lines, just as much of my relationship with my family is. I have only come out to my mom but have never really told her about being trans, but we have had other conversations like that. It is the subtle recognition that my mom still uses they pronouns for my

friends even after having a conversation about pronouns, it is the gentle reminder that i can talk about my experiences being queer bashed and threatened with violence that she listens to me and hears me as her child. it is the recognition in my family that this is the way that my father is, the history that he has never told us but the ways he talks about it or never talks about. it is these kind of conversations that make me feel grounded and centered because we don't use the right words that i learned going to university, but it is the ways we have these conversations and it is the ways that we are still together, growing, telling stories, hurting and living.

from mia mingus' post "On Collaboration: Starting with Each Other"

<http://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2012/08/03/on-collaboration-starting-with-each-other/>

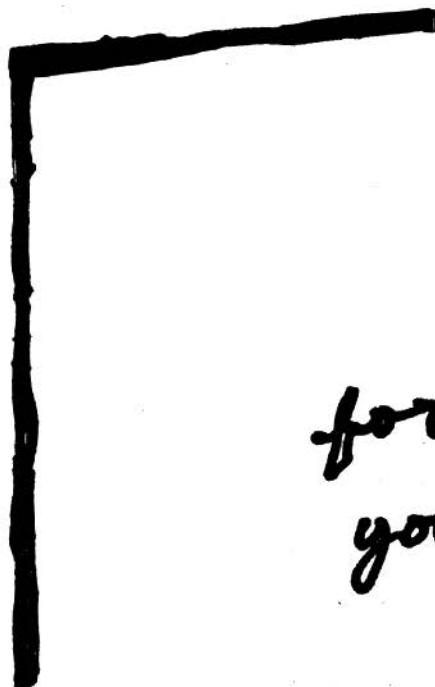
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← END NOTE / COZ SHITS COMPLEX

Reflecting back a year ago or so I thought my dad and his commitment to his work, financial stability, and not to his family, or to be present as a 'father' who was warm, loving, caring was a failure as a father a failure as a person. I couldn't forgive him those days. Looking back at the way I watched as a child as he chased my brothers around, slamming doors, threatening to strangle, reacting at every wrong doing, slamming his fists on the table and the ways this manifested in my anxieties and my internalization of oppression, I wasn't at the point to forgive my father or see where he was coming from. I don't agree with his violence and the ways he treats my mother constantly even today. But I guess I am at a point where I can't change other people, I can't expect forgiveness from someone who won't give it even if the things that they have done have made me feel fucked up in so many ways. All I can do is try to forgive myself which has become the hardest journey I have embarked so far but with forgiveness comes acceptance. With forgiveness gives me gentle reminders that time is not scarce, love is infinite, when I feel unheard and silenced it is because I am silencing and not listening to myself. Listening to myself is the most important things. To forgive myself that I have the capabilities to hurt others, people who I love, is a deep deep hurt that I know needs forgiveness for myself because I do what I do. I am who I am. I want to act with intention and I want to act out of what compassion and love means to me.

Right now its forgiving myself, accepting my dad for who he is and how he loves, accepting the ways that I am trying and maintaining integrity for myself and how that gives me patience.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN



for
yourself

loving differently doesn't mean loving less

I'm trying to remember that loving differently doesn't mean loving less. Every day I have little thought bubbles that pop up between my thoughts - when I'm washing the dishes, when I am following my to-do list. It's a brief moment in time where my mind wanders to a place that has been resting with me lately. This place has been making feel restless and impatient with my feelings. It's like the times I want things to resolve in a certain way but I don't want to put the energy into making them that way or that the world is not working in that way. In this way right now, I am impatient because I am holding myself up to standards and expectations of my own feelings that I know I can't reach just yet; who knows if it is even a point that I will reach or even breeze by. All I know is that I am looking towards the future, *again*. I have been trying constantly every day, every week, every month to stay present but yet the drifts of projecting into the future into someone/something I am or will be keeps coming back to my mind. Staying present with what is happening with me means recognizing how looking towards the future or trying to be in the future affects my awareness of myself. I am aware of the ways this longing can seek into my desires and my current mental workings in ways that I don't realize but through gentle prodding and uncovering, I can find similarities with my stronger more blatant desires for something else; over there or elsewhere.

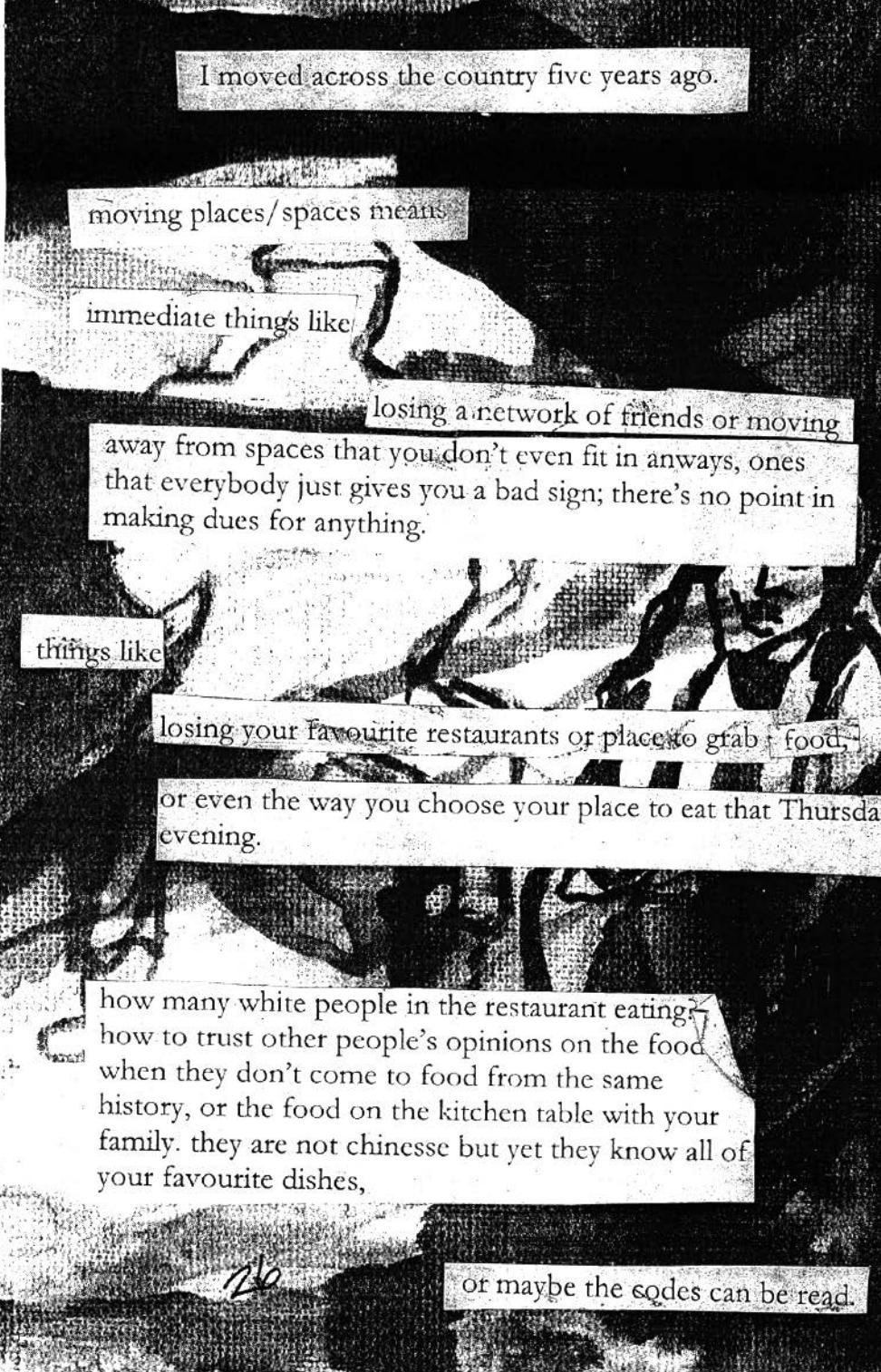
So here I am in the present realizing that another way that I need to acknowledge the present is not just to disengage - something that I played out this entire summer which served well. Disengaging with my repetitive thoughts and racing mind allowed me to focus on my feelings and hold them at the centre of my life, even if it was difficult for me to recognize my feelings. I'm feeling impatient; I want myself to address my relationships with whiteness in my life, to get it all together to make sense of it. I used to wait. Let things unravel themselves and let time make sense of things but at this moment I know that waiting is not an option. Waiting means that I am constantly unsure about what I am going to do next and I am unhappy with the situation right now.

letting go of whiteness is hard

loving differently doesn't mean loving less.

I'm trying to shift my relationship with whiteness. In these ways I have stopped hanging out with white people in such a casual way. The only people that I see on a constant basis who are white are my roommates and people at school. the music I listen to is mostly by people of color, the people in my latest contact file on my phone are people of colour, the people I care about more and more and want to be open with and build things with are people of colour. Everything new; everything that I want to build is with people of colour because there is no space for whiteness in this new mindset I am creating for myself.

But then, how do I engage again with relationships and friendships, connections with white people that I have been building for the last while. One of the ways that I have been trying to be more accountable & caring to the people in my life is to work through things. In so much of my work, I am trying to value my past, my family's past histories and our stories. I am trying to break free of western thought that enforces a linear way of thinking where things are in the binary and things can only be one way or another. *things are complicated and I need to remember that, right?* There are still white people in my life that I care deeply about but our relationships have changed. So I'm trying to recognize that by breaking my connections with white people does not mean cutting things off, or that building bigger connections with the already existing relationships does not mean guilt or shame. Shifting my relationship with whiteness means that my relationships are not an either/or; it means that the space I am building with whiteness changes.



I moved across the country five years ago.

moving places/spaces means

immediate things like

losing a network of friends or moving away from spaces that you don't even fit in anyways, ones that everybody just gives you a bad sign; there's no point in making dues for anything.

things like

losing your favourite restaurants or places to grab food,

or even the way you choose your place to eat that Thursday evening.

how many white people in the restaurant eating? how to trust other people's opinions on the food when they don't come to food from the same history, or the food on the kitchen table with your family. they are not chinesse but yet they know all of your favourite dishes,

or maybe the codes can be read.



why do I trust a classmates opinion when he says the place
like a cafeteria style?

when I think cheap, make-shift and dirty probably most of
the Chinese restaurants I have eat at in

Vancouver

Victoria

Toronto

oh maybe montreal

I think about the places with the always changing sanitation approval signs but yet they serve great dumpling and there's always fresh tofu and those deep fried rice snacks. restaurants in Toronto Chinatown. the fresh tofu place was beside my work and I'd also go there for a snack on my lunch break. I think about the Chinese restaurant I went with my dad two years ago where the floors are wet and background faded and my tells me that we used to go as kids. this place on Pender ave. in the southern part of Chinatown where businesses are not there anymore because Chinatown is moving to the suburbs.

and then I forget that this café/restaurant is only two blocks away from my mama's old apartment – a peach five story building with dark mold on the outside where lived there til she was eighty-two, two break-ins and one fall later.

this café where the waitress mistooked me for my younger brother and that my dad was just in denial because he doesn't realize that I'm a boy. I used to think my dad was in denial. I don't know anymore.

things you forget when you move places:

there are the easy ones, the ones you tell others when they have moved to a new city but you always forget to remind yourself:

- building things take time
- finding people, places, memories does too.

things you forgot when you moved:

- forgot to ask my mother how to cook rice
- forgot that I can still come back to places even if I believe so much that this is the last place that I want to return to
- forgot that all of my family lives on the west coast except my aunt who lives in Toronto
- forgot to keep in touch
- forgot my sewing machine
- forgot about distance

things I lost / left when I moved across the country

- all my scraps of fabric
- all my art supplies, pens, pencils, markers
- old routines, old bus routes
- my best friend finishing her last year of university
- my poh poh when she was seventy-seven
- my gong gong when he was eighty-two
- my misunderstand of why on my mama has photos of my brothers on her bookshelf
- my memory of all the streets I took to avoid everyone

five and a half years ago: I moved from Victoria to
Toronto. I left in rejection, left out of spite, left
from alienation

as I am preparing to move again, I find it hard to figure

out/prepare for leave

for leaving or for arriving

or for acknowledging

for coming to terms with
not settling

or moving out a passing through stage for being
present. taking each step and conversation as is.

how do you talk about moving cities?

- moving through different realms of feelings
- moving through life phases or even just coming into

things that I learned here this is for fellow queer and trans brown
folx I have met here in montreal

- give forgiveness, ask for complexities
- people don't travel that far away from their birth families. it may be across a border or two but mostly the time zone stays the same.
- surviving means making due with what you got or not even; it means just trying to catch another breath so you don't cut yourself
- living in a city where most of your space and people you see are white means learning how to build spaces that hold and cradle your brownness

- it means making sure that setting rituals and routines to make sure that you see all your friends of colour even though it feels harder. *maybe we are all busy. I used to think I had a huge amount of internalized racism but now I know that it fucking hard to exist and be with white folx at all. I feel like we are all in crises a lot and it's just "I'm busy" "I'm tired" "I'm isolated" "why am I all alone"??* when it is the easiness of whiteness that gets me down. whiteness doesn't give me reminders to let me know that my yellowness can still exist.

OUTRO

I give many many thanks to asian arts freedom school even when I sat there amongst other queer and trans brown writers and artists, I was still struggling to come into those identities/adjectives for myself. I appreciate being able to grow into my identities as a writers and artist surrounded by all the freedom schoolers from around 2009 – 2010. thanks to Jorge and kenji for the weekly writing sessions on my kitchen table in Kensington market. having the space to hear your writing and for you to hear mine is something that I can never forget and hope to build more spaces for writers &artists of colour.

Toronto was a good time, good starting point for my young self figuring out queerness and identifying more strongly as a person of colour or chinese or east-asian.

THX / APPRECIASHUNS

thanks to keet for spending many hours chatting about zines and azn stuff and art materials / ethel street (r.i.p) for another home in montreal / cera and becca for azn meetings / nhu for so much lov in my life and freedom / khristina steady steady being there / nadia, molly, sarah. *1 APOC from NYL*

